

1985

Social change and acculturation among Tai Dam refugees in central Iowa

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Social Change and acculturation
among Tai Dam refugees
in Central Iowa

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by

Susan Scott

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fullfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: Sociology and Anthropology
Major: Anthropology

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1985

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated with love to my son, Peter, who has always been kind, strong, and beautiful to me and who is growing to be all these things and more to himself.

I. INTRODUCTION

On April 30, 1975, the United States withdrew the last of its troops from the Republic of Vietnam. The massive evacuation of the American forces had multiple repercussions: it left thousands open to political reprisals by nationalists, it allowed the instigation of communist governmental policies, and it expropriated the economic support it had lent South Vietnam for the last 30 years (Liu et al. 1979:20). During the first year after evacuation, unemployment reached three million and underemployment constituted another million (Whitmore 1979:20).

During the spring of 1975, economic, political, and social disruptions were also factors in Laos. On May 9, 1975, the Pathet Lao took over the government in Vientiane. In so doing, they overturned the Laotian political, administrative, and social structures (Baccam 1982:5). Within a two-month period in the spring of 1975, changes in the governments in Saigon and Vientiane resulted in radically different regimes coming to power. As a direct consequence of these actions, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and Laotians left their lands in an attempt to seek better lives elsewhere. Between 1975 and 1979, approximately 280,100 Southeast Asians became refugees in the United States (U.S. Department of Health 1984:A-1).

Although today thousands remain in camps in various Southeast Asian countries, over a million refugees have been relocated to a number of different countries. The present study picks up on the theme of resettled refugees and specifically examines what has happened to one particular group: the Tai Dam formerly of Laos and before that Vietnam, who today reside in Iowa. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the process of adjustment and acculturation as it has taken place among these individuals.

In 1975, Iowa was one of several states to respond to the plight of Southeast Asians. Under the auspices of then Governor Robert Ray, the National Governor's Association Task Force on Refugees was formed. Iowa, being one of the initial three states in this program, raised over half a million dollars in small public donations for refugee relief. The Iowa SHARES (Iowa Sends Help to Aid Refugees End Starvation) donations implemented a highly structured statewide resettlement program which became an integral part of Iowa's commitment to the refugee effort.

By September of 1982, 8,700 Southeast Asians had resettled in Iowa (IRSC 1982:3). Today the refugees live in 85 of Iowa's 99 counties, although they represent less than one-third of one percent of Iowa's population of 2.9 million (U.S. Dept. of Health 1984:A-1). Of those 8,700 Southeast Asians who have settled in Iowa, 2,500 represent an ethnic

group called the Tai Dam (Baccam, 1984).

On July 2, 1984, the total Tai Dam population in the United States stood at 3,000 (IRSC 1984:5). Five hundred Tai Dam live in various states such as Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, and California, while the remaining 2,500 or 80% continue to reside in Iowa, their original state of settlement.

Thirty years ago before settling in Iowa, the Tai Dam resided in northern Vietnam in the area around Dien Bien Phu. With the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the twelve-state Tai Federation collapsed. The Tai Dam, at that time, requested asylum in Laos. Laotians shared with the Tai Dam certain linguistic and cultural similarities. The city limits and surrounding vicinity of Vientiane became the home of the Tai Dam for the next twenty years of their lives. In 1975, Laotian political upheavals placed the Tai Dam in refugee status once again. From temporary camps, they petitioned various nations for a place they might call home. Iowa was one of the states to answer that call.

Looking at factors of acculturation in the state of Iowa, an attempt is made to uncover those variables which contribute to or impede the socialization process. The refugees are faced with learning a new language, a new culture, finding new jobs, locating homes, and living in a new land that is radically different from that which they had known. While problems accompanying the acculturation process

date back to Columbus' first contact in 1492, each immigrant group is unique and thus brings its own set of particular and special problems. This thesis examines the process as it unfolds among Tai Dam women residing today in Central Iowa.

The process of acculturation is examined to determine what type of woman makes the transition to the belief system held in the United States. Is she young, old, liberal, or traditional? Is she a woman with many children? Is she working outside the home? Does she come from a poor household? How proficient is she in the English language? How do these concepts interrelate and provide access into the host community?

A. Objectives

The objectives of this investigation are to attempt to piece together factors which may affect this process. Age, education, length of time in the United States, family size, family income, women's world view, and women's occupation are examined to determine possible interrelationships. In addition, a social urbanization process is researched to determine the degrees of participation attempted within the host community.

Social urbanization is a reflection of a combination of variables which may indicate a subjective choice on the part of the researcher, however, it was felt that these variables

best symbolize a knowledge regarding the dominant society. Such things as newspapers, magazines, television programs, and oraganizational memberships equal the sum of participatory factors in a social urbanization score.

Social urbanization levels are constructed of combinations of such factors which contribute to Tai Dam adjustment in a radically different environment. These levels are compared and/or combined with individual factors such as age or occupation to determine the relationship each has to the process of acculturation.

The acculturation and assimilation of the Tai Dam are extensions of their process of adaptation. Acculturation may be defined as the process whereby an individual learns a culture that differs from his/her original society. Acculturation occurs when the behavior of the minority group is reasonably consistent with the norms of the majority group (Cunning 1975:3). Assimilation, on the other hand, is the end to the story of adaptation. Successful assimilation depends on both acculturation by the minority group and acceptance by the dominant group (Cunning 1975:3).

The data gathered for this research project are comprised of and presented in two general categories. Part one of this thesis, which includes Chapters one and two, consists of historical overviews designed to illustrate the past and present ethnographic records of the Tai Dam and to emphasize the degree of acculturation they have been able to

accomplish within the state of Iowa. Part two, which includes Chapters three, four, and five, focuses on specific ethnographic data gathered by anthropology graduate students, Sue Ellen Bell (1984), Martha Murray Stewart (1985), and myself under the direction of Professor Michael B. Whiteford. Chapter six provides a summary and conclusion of research findings.

B. Background

This thesis is concerned with specific concepts of ethnicity, acculturation, and assimilation into the mainstream of life as we know it in the United States. Ethnicity is conceived in various ways by various authors. Hraba sees it as an emergent phenomenon (Hraba 1979:28). Change affects the course of ethnic groups in their interrelationships toward one another and the larger society (Hraba 1979:28). Anya Royce states simply that ethnicity is "ethnic based action" (Royce 1982:18). Frederik Barth, 1969, defines ethnicity as the "social organization of cultural difference" (Holloman 1978:3).

Assimilation, on the other hand, is one aspect of cultural evolution (Hraba 1979:29). Hraba defines it as "the process by which diverse ethnic and racial groups come to share a common culture and have equal access to the opportunity structure of society" (Hraba 1979:29).

Herskovits elaborates the definition to include a broader populace. He quotes Robert Park's (1930) interpretation which agrees with Hraba's, however, assimilation according to Herskovits and Park, culminates into an achievement of "cultural solidarity sufficient at least to achieve a national unity" (Herskovits 1938:13). Bochner (1982) does not limit the extent of the process, but defines it as follows: "assimilation occurs when a group or entire society gradually adopt or are forced into adopting the customs, beliefs, folkways, and lifestyles of a more dominant culture" (Bochner 1982:24-25).

For our own purposes in this study, ethnicity is defined as the total portrait of a reference group which shares a common history, symbols, and values which bond them together as a distinct entity. Assimilation in this same context refers to an ethnic group's adaptation process to the belief system of the dominant culture. Acculturation, finally, is the process of acquiring such belief systems.

The early 1930s saw the general use of the term "acculturation" among anthropologists in the United States (Foster 1962:25). They used the term to describe that process occurring when two or more previously separated cultures come into contact with one another. The significant changes occurring may be produced in either or both cultures.

Acculturation processes today are the result of imposing twentieth century scientific cultures upon traditional, prescientific cultures (Foster 1962:26). A society is said to be traditional if ways of behavior continue to exist from generation to generation with little change taking place (Hagen 1962:55). Some characteristics accompanying traditionalist societies are behaviors governed by custom rather than law, hierarchial social structures, and social positions which are inherited rather than achieved (Hagen 1962:55). An additional and important factor is that in relation to industrialized nations, traditional societies are unproductive in the sense that they do not produce wanted resources (Hagen 1962:56).

The Tai Dam culture exhibits the characteristics of traditional societies. Originally from northern Vietnam, their land was held exclusively by elite ruling families. It was passed along to succeeding generations of the same surnames such as Lo and Cam (Bell 1984:3).

Such traditional trends will not continue in societies unless their basic behavior patterns are hierarchal, ascriptive, and custom-ruled (Hagen 1962:56). Periods of change within traditional societies deletes inheritance as the sole determinant of social position and productivity increases (Hagen 1962:57). Reliance on farmland as a sole means of support diminishes while industrial occupations take

precedence. With this diminished value in the agricultural process occurring, land inheritance rules cease to dominate these changing cultures.

In addition to changes such as inheritance rules, changes themselves may be modified. An outstanding feature from one culture may be reinterpreted by another culture to conform to their own patterns of meaning while still maintaining its original function. This process of reinterpretation is called "syncretism" (Foster 1962:27). An example in the Tai Dam culture may be the concept of hard work which is a valued cultural tradition. Factory work and manual labor is esteemed for the independence it creates as well as the income. Euro-American values would lean toward higher status positions for the prestige they provide as well as the increased ability to purchase valued goods. Tai Dam values may reinterpret those value positions to their own system which respects manual labor.

Acculturation, like all social phenomena, generally is patterned and predictable (Foster 1962:28). Similar reactions to common cultural stimuli repeatedly occur time after time in various parts of the world. These occurrences have had no significant historical relationships. Such changes, then, are independent of various cultural forms. Rather, they are functions of similar circumstances (Foster 1962:29). Numerous anthropological studies suggest generalizations representing these occurrences. Two of these

generalizations regarding acculturation processes apply directly to the Tai Dam:

1. Cities are focal points of change.
2. Changes in economic bases are inadvertently followed by significant changes in the nature of family organization (Foster 1962:29-32).

Cultural change, according to Ward Goodenough, concerns no more than a change in a community's "real or phenomenal conditions" and only incidently includes changes in the "criteria by which people discern things, their beliefs about things, their purpose in relation to them or their principles for dealing with them" (Goodenough 1963:258). Since anthropologists define culture as the shared products of human learning, Goodenough's "incidently" comprises the very focus of the Tai Dam situation researched in Iowa (Goodenough 1963:258).

Changes come to be through exposure, knowledge, and acceptance of that knowledge. A major determining factor in the acceptance of host community values is how new phenomenon are perceived and interpreted (Foster 1962:26). The same phenomena may well be perceived very differently by people from different cultures.

It is such phenomena or belief systems that are examined in the Tai Dam acculturation process. Specifically, what belief systems are accepted from the host culture

constituting a "liberal" Tai Dam woman versus a "traditional" Tai Dam woman who might reject the host philosophy and cling to belief systems compatible to her original culture.

According to study by Louise and George Spindler, Menomoni Indian women do not encounter the sharply "disjunctive" role expectations in acculturation that men do as long as they continue to play feminine expressive roles. Even when they move into the arena of instrumental acculturation roles such as work outside the home, the authors assume that the traditional flexibility of the feminine position helps make it possible for them to adapt to new expectations "without much disturbance and without deep psychological reformulation" (Hagen 1962:219)

Acculturation processes in the Tai Dam context are viewed in relation to women also. An attempt is made to isolate those variables responsible for accelerating or impeding this process and also to examine the structure of the belief systems currently held by the sample population as a measure of comparison to the host community.

C. Significance of Study

In Cuning's (1975) study of Greek ethnicity in Des Moines, she found the Greek community blended in appearance with the dominant society. Further, the main cultural tie of the Greeks was affirmed through religion (Cuning 1975:7).

The Greek church served not only as a common meeting ground, but also as a reaffirmation of ethnic similarity.

The Tai Dam contrast on both points. They differ from the flow of European immigrants in their oriental appearance. The women often continue to dress in traditional fashion with long black skirts. Compared to their Euro-American neighbors, they are small in stature. Not unlike other immigrant groups, their lifestyles revolve around families, however, they often choose (or are forced due to economic circumstances) to live in tenements where extended families can remain together. Some apartment complexes of seven or eight units may house large Tai Dam families. Moreover, the main cultural tie is maintained through ethnic mutual assistance associations (MAA) which have no religious basis.

The purpose of the Tai Dam study is to highlight acculturation factors much as studies of other Southeast Asian groups such as the Vietnamese of Salt Lake City, the Hmong of Denver, and the Vietnamese of Washington have been investigated (Thinh 1983, Nyuyen 1980, Haines 1981).

While numerous articles, periodicals, monographs, and biographies are devoted to the topic of Southeast Asian resettlement, women have seldom been the focus of these studies (Crandall et al. 1981:34). Moreover, rarely has there been more than a paragraph or two devoted to variables explaining acculturation processes or the examination of problems these changes may cause within families. This may

be due to such things as their inaccessibility as homemakers, the high cost of door-to-door interviews, the lack of opportunity for locating adequate numbers at work sites or organizational meeting places for interview purposes, the low profile deemed proper for Southeast Asian women, language barriers, or any of a number of sundry reasons. This study makes a modest attempt to highlight the specific acculturation process of the Tai Dam woman. To date, there have been only two other studies relating exclusively to the Tai Dam refugees (Bell 1984, Stewart 1985). Thus far, no studies have dealt directly with the possibly unique acculturation circumstances of Tai Dam women.

This study is important because it relates a long history of people in refugee status to their current position in the process of acculturation. Further, it adds to present day literature regarding Southeast Asians. Most significant, perhaps, is the contribution of important data for which there is a paucity of information unlike studies relating to Hmong, Lao, or other numerous Southeast Asian groups.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. The Acculturation Process

Over the years, massive numbers of people have immigrated to the United States. In their travels they have crossed every ocean and every continent to reach the promised land. Since the crossing of Christopher Columbus, forty-five million people have come speaking countless languages and representing a multitude of physical types and nationalities (Sowell 1981:3). A mixture of unity and diversity runs through American history much as it runs through American society today.

Discrimination has played a major role in the acculturation of subordinate groups. Yet, some of the most economically successful, such as the Orientals, have suffered the most severe forms of discrimination (Sowell 1981:3). Modernization throughout America's brief history has brought increasing means of assimilation by offering extended white-collar opportunities and mass public education. At the same time, it has not removed the resulting competition and discrimination arising over the accessibility to these mobil routes (Hraba 1979:7).

According to Royce, the factors of power, perception and purpose are specific themes assigned to the acculturation

process (Royce 1982:4). Dominant groups control power and do not consider themselves "ethnic" while they often perceive ethnic groups as stereotypes (Royce 1982:4-5). Purpose involves an inferior's intent to improve their situation (Royce 1982:6). Royce's theory may be illustrated by white Americans representing power and perceiving Mexicans as "wet backs" competing for jobs. The purpose of the Mexicans is to improve their lot by accepting the work ethic and general values of the dominant society. Such a process historically causes conflict.

In the case of the Tai Dam, conflict may arise in competition for jobs or housing. Applying these ideologies to the Tai Dam emphasizes the material rather than the psychological implications of a culture. Conflict may also arise due to past traumas, patriarchal influences, and loss of status. It may benefit the refugees to learn the host language and increase their economic success while it may cost them to discard traditional values in order to increase their chances of survival. This thesis addresses such choices and measures those variables relating to the acculturation process.

B. Recent Southeast Asian History

After 30 years of involvement in Indochina, the United States withdrew its armed forces thus opening the door in

1975 to a dramatic exodus of Vietnamese, Khmer, Laotians, and Cambodians (Nhu 1976:59). Since that time, over 1,200,000 refugees have been processed through resettlement camps seeking new lives in the United States (Tomasi 1984:32).

This mass evacuation was not the first in the lives of countless Vietnamese. In 1954, the Geneva agreements, which ended almost a century of French colonial rule, split Vietnam, giving citizens the option of deciding within six months whether they chose to live in the nationalist north or the "free" south (Montero 1979:xiii). The terms of the agreement stated:

Any citizen residing in a district controlled by one party who wished to go and live in the zone assigned to the other party shall be permitted and helped to do so by the authorities in that district (Dooley 1956:105).

Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Minh nationalist leader at the time, provided his "Benevolent Aid" to the Vietnamese farmers in the north by dividing up lands belonging to former colonial rich. He distributed these lands among the native poor. While the poor farmer's lands were vastly increased, they soon became burdened with such taxes that their profits decreased (Dooley 1956:63).

Many farmers, aware of their deteriorating situation under Hanoi's rule, opted for a life in the south. To prevent a mass exodus from North Vietnam, the government circulated stories of "imperialistic" French and Americans

who kidnapped Vietnamese citizens. Propaganda also came in the form of "re-education" classes which young people were required to attend each morning (Dooley 1956:64).

Distributed leaflets were another popular form of propaganda. One in particular showed graphic violence which was obviously staged. It depicted seasick refugees on an American escape-vessel. While they leaned over to vomit, their hands were systematically hacked off by sailors with white hats (Dooley 1956:66). Nevertheless, despite threats and fear of punishment, the partitioning of Vietnam resulted in massive relocations.

Again in 1975, the end of another political era resulted in further relocations. When the last helicopter lifted up from the shell-damaged runways of the International Tau Son Nhat in Saigon, there were still hundreds of would-be refugees left behind (Montero 1979:xvi). As aircraft were not available, different escape routes were used. The refugees frequently defied the coast guard and braved the storms of monsoon seasons as they set off in small boats designed to carry far fewer than the numbers they held (Montero 1979:xvi). Thousands died from hunger, thirst, and disease while thousands more drowned when their ill-equipped little boats sank (Montero 1979:xvi).

Whether the escapees left by boat, land, or air, those who survived made their way to refugee camps in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines (Tepper 1980:115).

In the camps, they struggled to elicit some sort of purpose from the despair of their surroundings. It was important to establish a national identification and a hope for the eventual return to their homeland. In some camps, the refugees' faith was buoyed by a traveling Vietnamese musician named Pham Duy. While he empathized with their despair, he also painted a portrait of home. He sang:

"One thousand years of Chinese rule. One hundred years of French rule. Ai-ee Vietnam" (Kelly 1977:2).

Another of Pham Duy's songs pleaded with his people to "keep the old ways" for the current regime would be as "fleeting as the French rule, if not more so, and surely, surely, they would go back to their beloved homelands some day" (Kelly 1977:3).

Vietnamese, Khmer, Laotians, and various tribal minorities such as the Tai Dam were directed through multiple resettlement camps to wait for sponsorship (Nhu 1976:2). Very often, they were separated from others within their ethnic group, instilling a sense of futility and isolation. Many times family members were separated from each other and some had even been left behind. Southeast Asian camp residents from various cultures were united in a widespread depression that was reflected in a fear of the American way of life (Nhu 1976:2). "Would the American way," they wondered, "be any improvement over that which they had

known?"

C. Overview of Asian Immigration to the United States

Asian immigration to the United States began with the 1848 California Gold Rush (Royce 1982:120). First employed as manual laborers, Chinese "coolies" then went on to railroad construction. Discrimination against them was so intense that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was passed (Royce 1982:121). The same year, the Immigration Bureau was moved from the Department of State with its focus on foreign relations, to the domestic Department of the Treasury. This signaled to the world that the United States was exercising its right to enact limitations to the process of immigration protecting its national interest (Cafferty et al. 1983:42). The Treasury Department was acting to prevent non-citizens from gaining land control and usurping occupations. Public opinion fired by organized labor turned sharply against further immigration and the Treasury Department rose to protect her own.

By 1930, more than eight million Chinese left China to settle in various parts around the world (Sowell 1981:133). The immigrating Chinese have often been referred to as "the Jews of Asia" (Sowell 1981:133). Becoming successful merchants, tradesmen, and bankers in poor foreign lands, they often aroused the same feelings of resentment, sporadic

violence, and political persecution that had plagued the Jews in Europe (Sowell 1981:133). Chinese skills made them valuable additions to poor countries while their affluence made them targets of aggression. Government ambivalence alternately restricted and encouraged Chinese immigration in the Soloman Islands, Indonesia, Mexico, Malaysia, and the United States (Sowell 1981:133). Many of those fleeing Vietnam after the Communist takeover have been overseas Chinese (Sowell 1981:133).

Even with the decline in immigration following these legislations, dislike and harrassment of the Chinese continued in the United States. Chinese-owned enterprises were pressured into withdrawing from competition with "white-owned firms" (Royce 1982:121). Niches left to them included wage laborers and self-employment such as laundries, restaurants, import outlets, and grocery stores (Royce 1982:121)).

The history of Japanese immigration was equally beset by prejudice and discrimination. Contact with the Chinese had hardened American attitudes against an Oriental appearance. Though fewer than 300,000 Japanese had immigrated to the United States by 1924, passage of the Immigration Act that same year virtually halted this trickle (Hraba 1979:314). Initially, the Japanese were concentrated in West Coast farm labor. Within a few years, many of these immigrant farm laborers bought their own land becoming independent farmers

(Hraba 1979:317). By 1920, 458,026 acres of California land was held by Japanese (Hraba 1979:319). Legislation of the Alien Land Law reduced their holdings to 304,966 by 1925, a reduction of nearly 44% (Hraba 1979:319).

In the business world the Japanese also excelled. They shunned unionization preferring members of their own minority who were more closely united to their Japanese employers than the working class at large (Hraba 1979:325). The growing prejudice of United States citizens toward the Japanese was fanned by their presumed "clannishness" and "unfair business practices" (Hraba 1979:325).

The flame of hostility was ignited when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. The United States government promptly implemented the forcible relocation of Japanese aliens and Japanese-American citizens from their West Coast homes to War Relocation Centers inland (Hraba 1979:325). Temporary assembly centers included livestock exposition halls, fairgrounds, and racetracks. A total of 110,000 residents of the United States, two-thirds of them citizens, were uniformly deprived of their constitutional rights. Government-supported anti-Japanese sentiments were expressed sporadically in verbal abuse or outbreaks of physical violence (Sowell 1981:171).

D. Southeast Asian Immigration Patterns in the United States

Since 1975, more than half a million Southeast Asians have arrived in the United States (Haines 1983:9). The exodus itself often was harrowing and dramatic. This disruptive experience left families fragmented and traumatized. The initial influx of 130,000 refugees in 1975 was reduced to a mere 17,000 over the next two years (Haines 1983:9). The traumatic plight of the "boat people" in 1978 resulted in entry levels of 20,000 and 80,000 in 1979 (see Table 1). The 1979 inflow was doubled the following year. By the end of calendar year 1983, over 658,994 Southeast Asian refugees had been admitted to the United States (Haines 1983:10).

The population structure of Southeast Asians has shifted since the initial influx to the United States in 1975. At that time, the vast majority of refugees were Vietnamese. In 1980 and 1981, the number of Vietnamese admitted to the United States shrank to 57% of the Southeast Asian population (Haines 1983:10). Within Southeast Asian groups, there is considerable ethnic diversity. For instance, those coming from Laos include ethnic Lao, Lao-Hmong, and the previously uprooted Tai Dam (Haines 1983:10). Also, many refugees from Vietnam are ethnic Chinese. The result of this refugee

influx is a Southeast Asian population which faces a dominant power structure in America, one that is viewed stereotypically by that structure, and one that must secure a niche in such a structure by competing in the economic market.

E. Tai Dam History

The Tai Dam are a distinct Southeast Asian ethnic group who have maintained an unusual sense of unity throughout their long status as refugees. According to legend, the Tai Dam originated from the descendents of the fourth son of the head of a principality in Sip Song Chou Tai or Twelve Tai States (Quy 1975:1). The Tai Federation was composed of various Tai People such as the Tai Dam, Tai Khao, Tai Deng, Tai Lao, as well as other ethnic groups including Meo, Yao, Yang, Lolo, Kha, Nong, and others (Quy 1975:1).

Surrounded by different ethnic groups, the Tai Dam remained apart from these other groups in the Tonkin area in what today is northern Vietnam. The inaccessible mountainous areas of their homeland aided them in sustaining their distinct language and culture. The Tai Dam historians viewed themselves as a "backward" people who led a simple style of life (Baccam 1982:5).

From 1888 to 1945, the Sip Song Chou Tai was annexed to the French Protectorate of Tonkin and administered directly

by the French. Although the Tai Dam were native to this area, the highest official rank attained by these indigenous people during this period was that of Chief of State (Baccam 1982:5). It was only in 1942 under nationalist pressure that a Tai Dam was designated Co-Chief of his native Vietnamese province of Sonla (Baccam 1982:5).

From 1945 to 1947, the Twelve Tai States were continually invaded by various armies including Chinese, Japanese, and Viet Minh (Quy 1975:1). Intense Vietnamese nationalist invasions commenced in 1950 resulting in many Tai Dam fleeing to Hanoi (Quy 1975:1). Those who remained hoped the political unrest would be fleeting and that they would be permitted to continue farming on their small plots. With the fall of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, 1000 Tai Dam who had remained in Vietnam requested asylum in Laos (Quy 1975:5-6). Having continually opposed communism, they feared reprisals at the hands of the nationalist political regime.

The Tai Dam settled in and around the Laotian city of Vientiane. According to former Tai Federation Vice President, Bac Cam Quy, the Lao government took pains to "accord the best possible treatment to the Tai Dam." He continued:

"The lack of Lao citizenship did not cause difficulties in our daily lives. The young were accepted in Lao schools and received equal treatment in the awarding of scholarships abroad. In short, conditions permitted the Tai Dam to lead peaceful and happy lives. Through the Vientiane Accords

and the formation of the government of National Union, we had no thought of our lives being troubled again. Most Tai Dam supported the new government and looked forward to a just and happy future" (Quy 1975:6).

Former Vice President Quy's view of life in Laos is at variance with the opinions expressed in the research field notes of Bell (1984) and Stewart (1985). They reported interviewing Tai Dam who experienced discrimination by Laotian citizens. Perhaps because of his political position, Quy himself was afforded an "easy integration into Lao society" (Quy 1975:6).

The Laotian history, language, and customs that Mr. Quy called "ethnically similar" to that of the Tai Dam were actually very different from the type of lifestyle the Tai Dam had known in the mountainous North. Still, Mr. Quy states the new government assisted the new residents with gainful employment and "in time social distinctions between the two ethnic groups disappeared" (Quy 1975:6).

In Laos, twenty years of existence without war passed for the Tai Dam. On May 10, 1975, nationalist invasions brought the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh. Within several months, the neutral government of Laos succumbed to the Pathet Lao (Bell 1984:4). Once again fear of nationalist reprisals placed the Tai Dam in the position of refugees. Their wish for independence was continually in opposition to the communist regime under which they could not anticipate fair treatment (Stewart 1985:4). Expectations of oppression,

reprisals, and a lack of Laotian citizenship forced the Tai Dam to seek asylum under a "liberal" rather than the expected "totalitarian" nationalist regime (Quy 1975:7).

The Tai Dam fled by land, boat, and airplane. Many died from hunger, thirst, and disease. Others drowned when their ill-equipped little boats sank (Montero 1979:xvi). Those surviving made their way to refugee camps in Thailand where they struggled to elicit some sort of purpose from the despair of their surroundings (Tepper 1980:115).

Most of the Tai Dam were held in a Thai camp called Nong Khai (Baccam 1982:5). From there they appealed to various nations for acceptance as potential residents. The state of Iowa was the first to respond to their plea (Stewart 1985:4).

F. The Tai Dam in Iowa

Under the auspices of then Governor Robert Ray, one of three members of the National Governor's Association Task Force on Refugees, Iowa formulated its Iowa SHARES (Iowa Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation) Program (Gim 1980:24). In 1975, this month long program raised half a million dollars in small public donations for refugee relief (Gim 1980:24). These donations implemented a highly structured statewide resettlement program which became an integral part of Iowa's commitment to the refugee effort. Among the 8,000, refugees admitted to the state of Iowa at

that time, nearly 2,000 were Tai Dam (IRSC 1982:5).

At present, approximately 2,500 Tai Dam live in Iowa congregated mainly in and around the city of Des Moines. Rates of outmigration are minimal despite comparative harsh weather conditions. While approximately 500 Tai Dam have relocated to such states as Texas and California, the remaining 80% continue to remain in their initial state of residence maintaining close family and community ties (Baccam 1985, Stewart 1985:5).

III. METHODOLOGY

Under the direction of Dr. Michael B. Whiteford, Sue Bell (1984), Martha Stewart (1985), and myself, Susan Scott, began a study of various aspects of the Tai Dam in Iowa. Because of the researchers' interests, the perceived need for such information, as well as the paucity of available data, the focus was directed at health, nutrition, and sociocultural adjustment respectively. Adult women over the age of 21 constituted the subject group.

Following an in-depth literature search on Southeast Asia as a culture area, a series of initial interviews were conducted with officials at the Iowa Refugee Service Center (IRSC) as well as with Tai Dam persons in Des Moines, Ames, Polk City, and Story City, Iowa. Eventually, an interview schedule containing 137 questions was constructed covering such things as demographic information, data on nutrition, medical world view, and the view of life as it exists in Iowa.

A non-random sample of 52 Tai Dam families in the Des Moines area was selected from a group of approximately 350 households listed in Iowa as of July 1982. The specific target population of women were female heads of households. Interviews were conducted in English though often the woman's language comprehension was insufficient to complete the

interview without assistance. In these instances, other family members such as husband or offspring frequently served as interpreter. At the completion of the interviews, field notes were written and transcribed in a master catalog. These notes ranged from in-depth descriptions of households and their activities to interpersonal interactions.

Follow-up interviews clarified findings and were directed toward certain interviewees, particular individuals at the IRSC. Also interviewed were specific scholastic and commercial institutions who had dealt with large numbers of Southeast Asians.

Interview schedule answers were coded and analysis completed on an AS/6 IBM 370 machine at the Iowa State Computation Center. Frequency distributions plus descriptive statistics, such as Pearson correlations and multiple regressions, are the means of analysis presented here.

The illustrated data collection was thus multi-tiered and consisted of five different levels for obtaining germane, constructive information. Restated, the method included the following:

1. Library research.
2. Interviews with IRSC officials and English-speaking Tai Dam persons.
3. Personal interview schedules using a 137 item questionnaire.

4. Post-interview field notes compiled
by researchers.
5. Individual follow-up interviews.

IV. THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 52 Tai Dam women ranging in age from 21 to 67 years of age (see Table 2). The mean age was 40. All of the women were married except two; one was single, the other was a widow. Educational levels varied from the equivalent of a high school diploma to a total lack of formal education (see Table 3). The greatest number (31%) of the respondents had no formal education whatsoever.

Forty-two percent were not employed outside the household (see Table 4). Of those who worked outside the home, the range of jobs included such occupations as factory work (19%), seamstress (15%), nurses aid (4%). An additional 10% classified themselves as "laid off" or "unemployed." This may be considered a part of either category making the division between work outside the home and work within the home fairly evenly divided.

The number of offspring averaged five (19%) illustrating a Tai Dam preference for large families (see Table 5). One young married woman had no children as yet. Twelve percent of the Tai Dam reported having nine, 8% reported a total of 10 children and two women had 11 children each.

Tai Dam was the language spoken most frequently in 51 (98%) of the sample homes. English, a close second at 94%

was followed by Lao and Vietnamese at 88% and 38% respectively.

A family portrait of a multilingual culture with a good grasp of the English language may be assumed. Multilingual families were indeed a factor, however, English was spoken and understood primarily by the children. Exposure to school classes in English enhanced their host-language acquisition leaving elders--especially women who did not work outside the home--with poor English skills. Many of the sample interviews were conducted using one of the respondent's offspring as interpreter.

Monthly household incomes for the sample ranged from \$70 a month to \$2,700 a month with a mean of \$1,000 per month (see Table 6). In 1982, the Iowa Development Commission published a per capita average of \$10,791 for Iowans' annual income. There are no figures available for Iowans' household incomes to use as a means of comparison to that of the Tai Dam. In 1982, however, the Iowa census reported a median income of \$22,052 for Iowa families. In other words, it appears that the average Tai Dam household brings in about half of what is normally the case in Iowa.

According to the IRSC, the Tai Dam are conscientious and hard working. The state of Iowa reports a 3.0% government assistance rate for refugees. The assistance rate for the Tai Dam is 2.5%. The food stamp program is a separate part of the welfare system and the IRSC does not consider it as a

part of the welfare system and the IRSC does not consider it as a part of government assistance. Fifty-two percent (N=27) of the families in the sample reported receiving food stamps, eight percent received Title XIX and six percent received Aid to Dependent Children payments.

Thus, a typical sample member would be a 40 year old married woman with five children. By United States standards her schooling is minimal. Her major language is Tai Dam, she has moved four times, and has been in the United States for seven years. She has an equal chance of being a full time homemaker or having a job outside the home. She and her family exist on \$1,000 a month and this amount may be supplemented by food stamps.

A. A Typical Tai Dam Family

The Des Moines homes of the Tai Dam families I visited vary as much as the homes of many other American families. Some appear expensive and elaborate. Most often, however, living rooms contained couches with a well-worn appearance and chairs that seldom matched. A "second-hand-look" may aptly describe the decor. Despite occasional threadbare furnishings, the flats, duplexes, apartments, and houses were scrupulously clean. The pungent odors of cooking often seeped from kitchens where the women of the households appeared to spend the bulk of their day.

A typical household would be similar to that of Oh (pseudonyms are used in these examples) and his wife Samlo and their three children. They live in a four-flat with Oh's parents living in one apartment, a brother, his wife and children in another and a cousin with his pregnant wife in the last. During the interview, all family members peeked in at the visitor who stayed so long and asked so many questions.

Oh's mother, approximately 68, is a tiny woman even by Tai Dam standards. Barely four feet tall, she greeted me with a warm hug then curled upon a torn brown sofa in front of the 24 inch television. She tucked her bare feet under her long black skirt and secured some stray grey hairs into the top-knot on her head. Occasionally she would catch my eye and grin, but mostly she busied herself with the seven or so grandchildren who wandered or crawled in and out of the living room. Often she would call authoritatively to Samlo in the kitchen or speak lowly to her pipe-smoking husband who sat next to her with his feet crossed under him like a carved wooden Buddha.

As in most of the Tai Dam households I visited, the ever-present television was a competitive auditory force; never shut off, occasionally acknowledged, and not ever apologized for. It seemed especially engrossing to the children and to the teenagers who like other American teens

found MTV's music videos especially enthralling.

Since the interviews were to be directed towards the female head of household, I persuaded Samlo's brother-in-law to coax her from the kitchen. She seemed shy, reluctant to speak and looked to Oh for approval after each verbalization. Like most of the Tai Dam women I interviewed, Samlo spoke little English. Her brother-in-law translated for her, with frequent apologies for his own English. In most cases where there was a language barrier for the subject, one of her children would serve the role as translator.

This method of translation appeared to elicit a more relaxed, perhaps more accurate response. The relaxation probably arises from the removal of the dominant males. Subservient female roles are a Southeast Asian cultural tradition (Van Arsdale and Pisarowicz 1980:100, Vignes and Hall 1979:444).

Since Samlo's children were too young to accept the translator role, brother-in-law was a volunteer since family members felt he had the best English skills. Brother-in-law would often attempt to answer for her without asking her opinion, however, with gentle persuasion that the answer come from Samlo, both parties eventually became attuned to the process.

Typical of most Tai Dam women, Samlo wore her long hair in a high bun on top of her head signifying that she was married. A long printed skirt and short sleeved blouse

appeared to be the attire worn in the homes of younger Tai Dam women. The men, on the other hand, were dressed in the casual American preference for jeans and polo shirts.

Old mother and father were also typical of their generation in attire. Most of the Tai Dam elders I had met were dressed completely in black with the women wearing black blouses, appliqued and held together with frog closures, over long black skirts. The elderly women I observed preferred bare feet and they were thick with callouses. The older men also rejected shoes and like the women, they often tucked their legs up under their bodies, "Buddha-fashion," on their sofa or chair. Wide legged black pants and a Chinese-style black shirt was the common choice for elder males.

The children of Oh and Samlo were two boys aged six and four and a three-year old girl. They were dressed in shorts or jeans or dresses as were all the Tai Dam children I encountered. They were also likely to be Samlo's last children as she said "three is enough" to feed and clothe in the United States and she had been fitted with an intrauterine device to prevent further pregnancies.

B. Household Activities and Structure

The kitchen appeared to be Samlo's domain. She would excuse herself now and then using a few English words (of which I suspected she knew a great many more) and slip into

the kitchen to tend her steaming pots. As in most of the homes I visited, the kitchen was small, old fashioned, but clean and well-stocked with pots and pans. Old mother would call to Samlo while she was there. I suspected they were conferring about the cooking, but the elder woman never set foot inside the kitchen during this two-hour visit.

Pictures and paintings were missing from Samlo's walls. Many of the other homes I visited had family photographs on the wall. Some of them had managed to retain pictures or ethnic art works from their homelands. These were displayed with seeming pride in places of prominence within households. Small carved statues, boxes and stone sculptures were arranged in the home of one particular family which appeared to be of high status. This family had a large, spacious apartment and furniture resembling a few fine old antiques.

One of the bedrooms was visible from the living room where I sat interviewing Samlo. The blonde twin bed had an army blanket thrown across it and I could see a small dresser painted blue with many chips in it. A few of the bedrooms I had glimpsed in the other homes also had mismatched pieces.

Many of the Tai Dam women I interviewed held down full-time jobs in addition to their work at home (42%). Samlo had worked for the past two years at a local factory which manufactured mirrors. Although she was aided by her mother-in-law and father-in-law with child care, she still had the usual weekend chores such as marketing and laundry.

While her husband's relatives wandered in and out of her apartment with their own baskets of clean clothes and sacks of food, Samlo endured my interrogation with the same patience and politeness that I received in every Tai Dam household. I was aware that she had countless chores of her own to complete on her day off, however, she never indicated that she had anything more pressing to do than answer my questions.

Samlo's home was typical of many Central Iowa Tai Dam. It had a kitchen, living room, and two or three bedrooms. Pets were conspicuously absent in all but one of the 52 homes. The homes were often shared with other Tai Dam families in the form of extended, but separated, family members. Household chores were shared with the eldest members appearing to accept the bulk of the child care. The warmth and mutual support of family members was evident and attested by one of Samlo's responses. When I asked her what was her favorite leisure time activity, she responded, "To be at home with my family, my children."

V. THE RESULTS

A theoretical model of cultural factors was constructed from seven variables. These consisted of the woman's age, educational levels, family income, number of children, and number of years in the United States. These were calculated for each member of the sample.

Women's World View, the sixth variable, was constructed from the following survey questions investigating personal value systems:

- The man commands the family. The woman obeys.
- The man must make the important decisions.
- Some work should be done by man, some by women.
- It is permissible for men to leave by themselves if they want.
- It is permissible for men to have extra-marital affairs, but not for women.

The Tai Dam women were asked to respond to one of five choices: firmly in agreement (1), agree (2), indifferent (3), disagree (4), and firmly disagree (5). The same range of answers were applied to a question regarding a maintenance of homeland traditions. These questions included language spoken at home, religious beliefs, and the maintenance of traditional holidays. From the responses to these questions,

a scale was developed (see Table 7). A woman who scored high on the Women's World View may be assumed to have a belief system similar to that largely held by the host community. Low scores may be indicative of a more traditional, patriarchial Tai Dam belief system. The scales ranged from one denoting very traditional world views (1.9%) to twelve denoting very liberal view points (1.9%). The mean was 9.500 and the median was 9.429.

Social urbanization, the seventh variable, was designed using components valued by the host culture. Ownership of such articles as cars and televisions might indicate knowledge and acceptance of the host society since they are highly valued in the United States. For this reason, cars, televisions, and driver's licenses were included in the social urbanization variable. In addition to cars and television, further components in the social urbanization variable included information regarding membership in religious and/or cultural groups, newspaper and magazine subscriptions.

Like the women's world view variable, Social Urbanization scales were drawn illustrating a homology with the host community if they were high and a lack of reference to the host community if they were low (see Table 8). A score of 1 on the scale, for example, may indicate a traditional Tai Dam woman who does not work outside the home, does not drive, and reads no current United States

periodicals perhaps due to poor language skills. A high score of 7 might indicate a woman who drives to work, regularly watches television programs, and may be a member of a religious or cultural organization. Thirty-three percent of the women fell within the mean of 4.942. The median was close at 4.676 with a mode of at 5.000.

Relationships between variables were assessed using Pearson correlations (see Table 9). The sample correlation coefficient (r) is used to denote strength of interrelationships. Pearson correlations determine the degree of associations between variables while values (p) determine levels of significance. Strong associations were indicated by coefficients which were significant at a $p < .05$ level. As we can see, there exists an important positive interrelationship between women's world view and social urbanization signified by a correlation coefficient of .251 ($p = .036$) (see Table 9). In other words, the more liberal the world view, the higher the level of social urbanization or acceptance of the host culture.

Social urbanization scores were not significantly correlated with age. Apparently, valued items such as televisions and driver's licenses were shared by many older women as well as young. The relationship between social urbanization and the number of children a respondent had also was not significant. This seems congruent with current host community values. The fewer children a woman has, the greater

her opportunity to avail herself of resources within the community. In addition, the relationship may not be significant due to probable high social urbanization scores of the larger families whose children might influence strong interests in such things as radios, televisions, and magazines.

A strong relationship exists between social urbanization and income. One might expect salary to influence the extent of purchasing power and access to community organization. The Tai Dam have a greater participation within the community when monthly earnings are high ($r=.509$, $p=.001$).

Consistent with popular notion of higher education correlating with higher community integration is the relationship existing between the Social Urbanization scale and the educational level of a Tai Dam woman ($r=.276$, $p=.058$). The greater the exposure to education, the greater the probability of host community integration.

Two interesting negative associations are related to women's world view. One correlation suggests younger Tai Dam have a more liberal outlook ($r=.310$, $p=.013$). Another correlation associates older women with a more traditional view which may have been an important factor in the differences observed between some parent and offspring groups.

Similarly age-related is the association existing between women's world view and the number of children

respondents reported ($r=-.420$, $p=.003$). Young women have fewer children. Those women with fewer children exhibited a high score on the Women's World View scale.

It might be interesting to pursue this study longitudinally to determine whether these young women will have more children given more time or whether they will truly accept the host community's value for smaller families. Economic factors may be at work exerting stronger pressures to keep families small than those host community preferences for fewer children. Longitudinal studies might examine the interrelationship of income and number of children when the 20 and 30 year olds in the current study are past childbearing age.

A more liberal world view is positively correlated with income ($r=.289$, $p=.043$) and is marginally connected with education ($r=.276$, $p=.063$). Again, larger incomes may allow women more exposure to host community values. Tai Dam women may, in fact, actually contribute to that income and become more aware of current views through their employment environment. Exposure may also be increased because of economic ability to attend movies, frequent shopping malls, view media forms, and make use of increased means of transportation.

The greater the number of years a Tai Dam woman spends immersed in a culture, the greater her access and exposure to those cultural views. It may be, however, that additional

variables are interrelating here also. Younger Tai Dam women who have been in the United States the longest may also have had the greatest exposure to our educational system. Here, American world views are taught, repeated, and illustrated on a daily basis. Length of time in the United States may also link back to income. Those Tai Dam spending the greatest number of years here may have had more opportunity to increase their incomes. Income, again, may indirectly promote acceptance of host-community views.

Age and income exhibit a positive interrelationship ($r=.391$, $p=.009$). This is probably due to the fact that older Tai Dam have been in the work force for a greater length of time developing greater skills and job stability. Younger workers may have recently joined the work force after completing their schooling. In time, this relationship may be completely altered with younger generations earning more than elder Tai Dam due to their higher levels of education and greater proficiency with the English language.

Strongly positive is the association between age and number of children ($r=.573$, $p=.000$). Young women have not had the opportunity to raise many children. A serendipitous factor may also be in evidence between these variables. Young women may be choosing either to have fewer children due to the host community's preference for small families or, as stated previously, they have not completed their child-bearing cycle. Age and women's world view, once again,

showed a strong negative relationship ($r=-.310$, $p=.013$).

Perhaps typical of the trend towards education is the strong negative relationship existing between age and education ($r=-.471$, $p=.004$). Many older Tai Dam women had less schooling than younger respondents. Referring to Table 3, we can see that the most frequent response to the number of years of education was zero (31%). An interesting point to consider is the rather large number of missing cases responding to this question ($N=20$). Referrals to field notes substantiates that the missing 20 fell into the "I don't know" category. It may well be that these women who were confused about their own education were actually a part of that category having no schooling at all. If this is actually the case, the number with no schooling whatsoever would accelerate to 58% ($N=30$). On the other hand, some of these younger women have had more exposure to schools in both Laos and the United States.

One might assume that a very traditional (high scores on the Women's World View scale, low scores on the Social Urbanization scale) Tai Dam woman would be older and have a larger family than younger women in this sample. This is further associated with education which shows a negative relationship to the offspring variable ($r=-.485$, $p=.005$). Those women with less education are older and have more children.

Looking at the Pearson correlations we can see that income appears to stand out as a strong influence in the process of social urbanization. Income, according to Crull and Morris, represents economic resource constraints as well as predispositional constraints in that income measures such variables as apathy, ambition, and the like (Crull and Morris 1983:4). Such personal factors may play a large part in one's ability to provide a livelihood. This point may be especially relevant considering the multiple traumas that the Tai Dam have faced. While this factor is acknowledged, it is impossible to pursue personality differences within this scope.

The obvious relationship of income per se upon social urbanization is illustrated by multiple regression models which were used to provide a more adequate description of the process under study. In contrast to correlations which are used here to determine the degree of association between variables, regressions are used for their ability to predict relationships. A series of two regressions were performed (see Tables 10 and 11). The first regression, measuring acculturation, tested social urbanization in relation to education, income and world view.

First, we can see that a high level of education is predictive of a wider range of community integration and acceptance of the host culture. Second, the constructed

women's world view scale is an indication of the knowledge and approval of traditional versus liberal values. A working model was developed to show the relationship between these variables (see Table 12). The model projects the influence of a world view scale as a means of indicating the direction of acculturation processes. Last, the influence of income is unmistakable as an important variable correlating strongly with Tai Dam community integration.

A second regression was performed on the education and income variables as they indicated the strongest predictive values. Income, it appears is the variable most responsible for access into, acceptance of, and integration within the host community knowledge, belief systems, and particular set of cultural values. While it shows up on regression tables and Pearson correlations as an outstanding factor, it is nonetheless invariably related to other aspects of acculturation such as education, ability to speak English, health, sponsorship, and so forth.

Economic self-sufficiency connotes the ability of a people to meet their own financial needs through their own efforts (Haines 1983:11). The psychological factors as well as the increased purchasing potentials induced by income may well combine to influence the process of acculturation.

VI. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Today, the 2,500 Tai Dam who live in Iowa are part of a cultural milieu that differs greatly from that which they had known. The process of acculturation has been examined from the vantage point of influential variables which impede or accelerate this process.

Data collection has attempted to measure women's attitudes ranging from life in Iowa to the "Americanization" of their children. From that data, common values shared by most Americans was used to construct a Women's World View scale. This was used as a means to measure liberal versus traditional values. Social urbanization was more concerned with access to community goods and goals. This scale measured an individual's knowledge and acceptance of American goods, services, and values.

Statistical results illustrate the following important conclusions:

1. Income has a positive relationship upon both women's world view and social urbanization.
2. Education is associated with a woman's interaction within the community and it affects a more liberal world view.
3. Young age is positively related to liberal world

views and inversely related to income.

The ramifications of these findings are varied. First, the relationship of income and Southeast Asian pride are matters of record. Young found refugee dependence on financial aid in Illinois decreased from more than 50% in the first year of United States residence to a mere 9% in the fifth year (Young 1980:14-15).

In Iowa, the Tai Dam's exceptionally low rate of financial assistance (2.5%) is a probable combination of Southeast Asian pride in hard work, independence, and the values of Iowa's resettlement agencies (Dabney 1980:93, Rasavanh 1984:2, Gim and Litwin 1980:25). The IRSC supports a premise of self-help for the refugees. Reliance on welfare systems is thought to "poison the climate" of the refugee's acceptability (Gim and Litwin 1980:25). While funds are available for those who need them, the practice is not encouraged by these agencies.

IRSC's first director, Colleen Shearer, believed the future belonged to the children, not the refugee adults who could not realistically hope to adapt fully to United States society (Gim and Litwin 1980:26). Tai Dam adults may find solace in America building incomes to provide such a future for their children. In so doing, they contribute to their own pride and independence and to greater access to the community. They also possess the knowledge that the future

of their children will be rewarded from the fruits of their labors. Such fruits will eventually return to them in the form of parental care should their current value system prevail.

A second dominant factor rising from the data is the influence of education upon a woman's role in society. Again, a combination of variables may be at work here. Younger women have greater exposure opportunities to American educational systems if they arrived in the United States during their schooling years. Education within such a system provides repetitive messages of American norms and values. Traditional Tai Dam belief systems appear at odds to educated women. In turn, education may increase employment opportunities which increases both income and further exposure to the American cultural system.

Education, on the other hand, may be the primary cause of the "generation gap" existing in some families. Various Tai Dam women complained their children were too "Americanized." Matters of dress, respect, and their children's preference for English were sometimes cause for concern to women who ranked toward the traditional end of the world view scale. The complaint that the children were too "Americanized" was seen as a mixed blessing to some. Lack of respect and tight jeans may warrant a mother's frown, but she knew that English language skills were the offspring's ticket to a better life in the host community. Field notes attest

that education was a value highly touted by those who had had so little themselves. Many women spoke proudly of one child who had graduated from high school or another who had gone to college.

Last, the interrelationships of age and education has been discussed at length. Since the young have greater access to American values, it would hold that their belief systems would be more compatible to those of the host community. Many older Tai Dam women have fewer English language skills and less contact with the host community. Forty-two percent of the sample continues to remain at work within their own home thus minimizing exposure to host community values.

While younger members may be pursuing education, older members have had greater opportunities to build job skills and job stability which in turn increases their financial status. Older members also have larger numbers of children to support and many times these children themselves contribute to the household income with part-time positions.

Clearly, further investigation is needed to determine whether cultural traditions are indeed being diluted in younger generations or whether time will allow such traditions as large extended families, multilingualism, multiple dwellings, ancestor worship, respect, and male dominance to exist alongside opposing values within the host community.

TABLE 1

Southeast Asian Refugee Arrivals
to the United States

(source: U.S. office of Refugee Resettlement)

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Arrivals</u>
1975	130,394
1976	14,446
1977	2,563
1978	20,397
1979	80,678
1980	166,727
1981	132,447
1982	72,155
1983	39,167

Total	658,994

TABLE 2

Age of Respondents (N=51)

<u>Range</u>	<u>Percent</u>
21-30	18
31-35	12
36-40	26
41-45	20
46-50	12
51-55	06
56-67	06
-----	-----
Total	100%

Mean=40 Median=39.6 Mode=37

TABLE 3

Educational Levels of Women (N=32)

<u>Years of Education</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0	31
1-3	22
4-6	13
7-9	09
10-12	25

Total	100%

Mean=4.5

Median=3.25

Mode=0

TABLE 4

Occupations (N=52)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Housewife	42
Nurse's Aid	04
Seamstress	15
Factory Work	19
Housekeeper	02
Janitor	04
Laundress	02
Unemployed/Laid off	12

Total	100%

TABLE 5

Number of Children per Respondant (N=43)

<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-1	07
2-3	34
4-5	21
6-7	12
8-9	14
10-11	12

Total	100%

Mean=5

Median=4.2

Mode=3

TABLE 6

Household Income (N=36)

<u>Income</u>	<u>Percent</u>
\$500 or less	14
\$501-\$750	17
\$751-\$1000	25
\$1001-1200	17
\$1201-1500	22
\$1501-\$2700	05

Total	100%

Mean=\$1001

Median=\$901

Mode=\$1500

TABLE 7

Women's World View (N=52)

<u>Code</u>	<u>Percent</u>
3	1.9
5	5.8
6	9.6
7	1.9
8	5.8
9	26.9
10	17.3
11	11.5
12	3.8
13	9.6
14	3.8
16	1.9
<hr/>	
Total	100.0%

Mean=9.5

Median=9.4

Mode=9

TABLE 8

Social Urbanization Scale (N=52)

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	0
2	1.9
3	17.3
4	25.0
5	32.7
6	13.5
7	7.7
.	
.	
21	1.9

Total	100.0%

Mean=4.9 Median=4.7 Mode=5

TABLE 9

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	<u>Social</u> <u>Urban-</u> <u>iation</u>	<u>Women's</u> <u>World</u> <u>View</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u># of</u> <u>Chil-</u> <u>dren</u>	<u>In-</u> <u>come</u>	<u># of</u> <u>Years</u> <u>here</u>
1	r = .250 p = .036					
2	r = .103 p = .235	.310 .013				
3	r = .127 p = .208	-.420 .003	.573 .000			
4	r = .509 p = .001	.289 .043	.391 .009	.085 .362		
5	r = -.169 p = .118	.131 .179	-.095 .254	.033 .416	.272 .057	
6	r = .283 p = .058	.276 .063	-.471 .004	-.485 .005	-.136 .248	-.008 .481

1=Women's World View
2=Age
3=Number of Children

4=Income
5=# of Years in US
6=Education

TABLE 10

Multiple Regression of Variables
Influencing Acculturation

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B Coefficient</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>T Ratio</u>
Education	.388	.260	1.765*
World View	.043	.084	.555
Income	.001	.523	3.425****
R square	=.340		*p < .10
Adjusted R square	=.278		****p < .001
F	=5.495		
df	=3 and 32		
p	< .003		

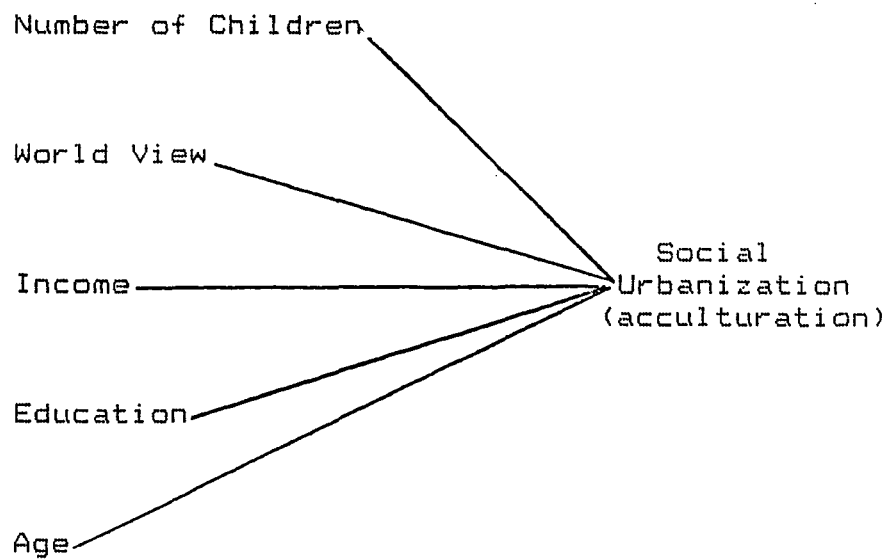
TABLE 11

Final Regression of Variables
Influencing Acculturation

<u>Variable</u>	<u>B Coefficient</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>T Ratio</u>
Education	.410	.275	1.914*
Income	.001	.550	3.832*****
R square	=.333		*p < .10
Adjusted R square	=.293		*****p < .0005
F	=8.263		
df	=2 and 33		
p	< .001		

TABLE 12

Variable Association



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VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Michael B. Whiteford, and my committee members, Dr. Helen H. Schuster and Dr. Joyce Mercier for their helpful support and suggestions. I also offer my gratitude to the Graduate College for assisting in the financial support of this project.

To Beth, my lovely daughter and fellow college student, I submit my heartfelt love and appreciation for your five years of being proud of your mom. That pride and support was often incentive enough to plug on.

Thanks to my fellow grad students, especially Martha, Donna, and Susan, for their continued support and understanding during my graduate years. Your friendship has meant a great deal to me.

To Sohn, I owe so much; my gratitude for staying on through some pretty rough times and my appreciation that those times did not deter you from the hopefully smoother path ahead. With my thanks comes also my continued respect, admiration, and my love.